

City of Greenbelt Police Department



Body Worn Camera Program Briefing

Summary:

The City of Greenbelt Police Department began researching the possibility of implementing body worn cameras in 2013. Since that time, a great deal of time and effort has been spent identifying the best policies, practices, and equipment for use by the Department. A Body Worn Camera Committee was formed composed of various members of the Department, including officers, supervisors, and FOP representatives. This committee worked diligently to create a body worn camera policy that was best suited to the needs of the Greenbelt Police Department. The Department tested numerous body worn cameras and evidence management platforms. Based on the testing, the Taser body camera and storage platform were found to be the most suitable options for the Department. In order to further test the suitability of the Taser products, the Department began a month long pilot program using four cameras deployed with front line patrol officers. As a result of the pilot program, the Department confirmed that the Taser product is the best option for the Department to effectively deploy a body worn camera program.

Policy:

The Department created and implemented its body worn camera policy prior to conducting the pilot program in April 2016. This policy was created in compliance with Maryland State law and the Maryland Police Training Commission guidelines. Policy recommendations were utilized from various subject matter experts including the Department of Justice, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Montgomery County Police Department. It is this policy that will guide the body camera program. Below is a summary of important aspects contained within the policy:

- Requires officers to conduct an inspection for proper functioning of the camera prior to their shift.
- Officers may only use the cameras when in uniform or prominently displaying the officer's badge in the case of a detective.
- Officers must activate the camera during all law enforcement related encounters and must notify the individual that they are being recorded as soon as practicable.
- Once the camera is activated, the recording will continue until the conclusion of the event or authorization from a supervisor. Officers may cease recording at the request of a victim or witness who does not wish to be recorded while giving a statement.

- Officers are prohibited from surreptitiously recording conversations of citizens and employees. Also prohibited from recording strip searches and recording in private places (restrooms, locker rooms, etc).
- Employees are prohibited from accessing the videos for personal reasons and are prohibited from attempting to copy, alter, or delete recordings.
- Administrative compliance reviews are conducted in order to ensure officers are complying with the policy.
- Violations of this policy are subject to the disciplinary procedures as listed in the general orders.

A copy of the entire policy is attached to this report.

Video Storage and retention:

The storage of video is the single highest cost and detractor from departments implementing body worn camera programs. While estimates of usage can be calculated, it is impossible to know the exact amount needed to fully sustain a program. Retention periods (how long we keep the video) are a main factor in trying to calculate that amount. Maryland law recently extended the amount of time that an officer complaint can be filed up to 1 year. As a result of this change, the Department has changed the retention period of all body camera video from 180 days to 366 days. While this change is beneficial in protecting the Department, it doubles the storage needs for the body worn camera program. The Laurel Police Department recently incurred an additional \$32,000 in storage expenses due to the unforeseen changes and needs. Due to the large amount of storage needs of our Department, it is recommended that the Department purchase the unlimited storage option available through Taser. This option is not currently available through any other vendors. Not only is this option more economical for the amount of storage needed, but it protects the Department financially from any unforeseen changes in policy or law. In our consultations with Director of Information Technology Dale Worley, he concluded that they are unable to provide the amount of storage needed for the cost of this Taser program.

Public Release of Video Evidence:

As with all police records, body camera video is subject to public requests for release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA). The same rules for redaction and release apply to the body worn camera footage. This factor has been a

major concern of agencies across the country in their decision to implement a body worn camera program. One of the many advantages of the Taser platform is the ease of redacting and sharing of video evidence. There are various ways that the video can be prepared for release, giving the Department great flexibility. Videos can be shared traditionally by downloading the video to a storage device (ie: CD, DVD, thumbdrive). As a more expedient alternative, the video can be shared electronically through the use of a digital link. This option sends an email to the requesting party and allows them to access the video directly. This option greatly reduces the amount of time and resources needed to fulfil the requests for release.

During the Department's pilot program, we experienced several FOIA requests for release of video related to a police incident. Given the beneficial features of the Taser platform, we were able to quickly comply with the requests and release the video in a timely manner.

Purchase Proposal:

The Department is proposing the purchase of the Taser Officer Safety Plan for a total of 48 sworn members. The plan is a 5 year contract for all equipment, storage, maintenance and licensing. Each officer (48) will be initially outfitted with a Taser Axon Body 2 camera, including several camera mounting options. All equipment is covered by full warranty, including providing replacement cameras while repairs are made. Each officer receives a full access software license for all evidence management controls. The Department is provided with docking stations for the charging and uploading of all cameras. The plan also includes integration with our CAD/RMS system which reduces the officer's workload by linking key data from the CAD system with the video file metadata.

Under the proposed plan, at the 2 ½ year point of the contract, all hardware and equipment is upgraded to the latest technology. And again, at the 5 year point of the contract, all hardware and equipment is upgraded to the latest technology. These upgrades outfit our officers with the newest technology and prevent the program from becoming outdated and obsolete.

The proposed plan includes unlimited storage of video. This prevents unforeseen costs that have plagued many agencies. Not only can we use this storage for the body camera videos, but also have the ability to consolidate other digital media evidence (photos, audio recordings, other video sources).

In addition to the body camera products, the proposed plan also provides every officer (48) with a Taser X26p. The Taser X26 is the less than lethal product that is most associated with the

Taser brand. The Department has been using the Taser less than lethal weapons for well over 10 years and has had great success in preventing unnecessary injury to officers and citizens. During the 5 year period of this contract, the Department will need to replace our current inventory of Taser weapons. The proposed contract consolidates the purchase of the body camera equipment and the Taser weapons into one contract, resulting in great savings to the Department.

The total proposed cost for the 5 year program is \$312,188.70. This contract can be paid entirely up front or on a yearly basis. Below is a breakdown of the year by year cost. The City has already approved \$47,000 in its annual budget based on original estimates of program costs. The increase in yearly cost from the original estimate is a result of selecting the unlimited storage option, the inclusion of the Taser weapons, the equipment upgrades and the CAD/RMS integration.

Year:	Cost:
Year 1	\$64,516
Year 2	\$61,824
Year 3	\$61,824
Year 4	\$61,824
Year 5	\$61,824
Shipping Cost	\$376.70
Total:	\$312,188.70

Taser is the sole source provider of the goods and services required to satisfy the recommendation of the Department. Despite being the sole source provider, Taser has offered the Department standard contract pricing with additional discounts. While the pricing is dependent on the individual department's need, we compared our pricing to that of Takoma Park Police Department. The contract from Takoma Park is attached, but a quick comparison is listed below:

Greenbelt total cost after discounts = \$311,812.00

Number of officers on OSP = 48

Cost per officer per month = \$108.26

Cost per officer per month Without CAD/RMS = \$106.18

Takoma Park PD cost after discounts = \$191,820.00

Number of officers on OSP = 30

Cost per officer per month = \$106.56

The total cost per officer for our contract is less than that of Takoma Park when compared with the same features. Our Department is receiving newer generation hardware and CAD/RMS integration, which was not purchased by Takoma Park.

The discounts being offered for this contract are valid through the end of 2016. They include special discounts offered from Taser directly to agencies that are conducting full deployments of body cameras. Taser has not announced if this program will continue in 2017.

Conclusion:

The Department began researching the possibility of implementing body cameras in 2013. Much care and diligence was exercised to ensure that all aspects were carefully explored and understood. It is at this time that the Department is making its recommendation on the program that it feels will best serve the needs of the City.

Attachments:

- *General Order 674: Body Worn Camera System Pilot Program*
- *Taser Quote for the Greenbelt Police Department*
- *Taser Quote for the Takoma Park Police Department*